

## For Immediate Release

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**Contacts:** Kristin Alexander, (360) 902-9307, pager: (360) 455-6301  
Michael Wilson, (360) 902-9317, cell: (360) 556-8836

## Employment Security Logs 250,000<sup>th</sup> Online Unemployment Claim

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Employment Security Department received its 250,000<sup>th</sup> online unemployment claim March 14, evidence that its Internet services are growing in popularity and that demand for assistance for jobless workers remains high.

“The Web site was very easy to use. I had no problem finding everything I needed,” said Sean Hamilton, 34, of Lake Stevens. Hamilton, a laid-off elevator construction worker, filed for benefits at <http://www.go2ui.com> when the 250,000<sup>th</sup> claim was recorded.

“Employment Security has long been a forerunner in using technology to better serve job seekers and business,” said Commissioner Sylvia P. Mundy. “We began improving our employment and assistance programs well before the recession. That foresight has enabled us to maintain pace with the increased demand for unemployment benefits and job placement services.”

Washington became one of the first states in the nation to accept Internet applications for unemployment benefits, and has repeatedly won recognition for its innovative practices.

Since publicly announcing its Web site system at <http://www.go2ui.com> October 2000, online applications have grown substantially. Today, about 28 percent of new claimants file online. In addition, many existing claimants use the computer instead of the phone to file their weekly claims.

An independent survey conducted last year for the Employment Security Department found that nine out of ten people who applied for unemployment benefits online said they found everything they wanted or needed to know at <http://www.go2ui.com>. Also, 97 percent of users found the application instructions clear.

“Since the turn of the millennium, Employment Security has transformed the way people apply for and receive unemployment assistance,” Mundy said. “The days of standing in line for an unemployment check are long behind us as we continue to look for new ways to meet customer needs. We recently launched new tools that enable employers to file and pay their unemployment taxes online.”

In past years, businesses in Washington stored their unemployment tax information on reels, then mailed them to Olympia. Employers say the new electronic tools save them time and money.

(More)

“The *UIFastTax* software calculates everything for us. I just push the button and go,” said Suzette Plautz, payroll coordinator for US Marine in Arlington, Wash., which manufactures Bayliner and Maxum pleasure boats and Trophy fishing boats.

Employment Security’s helpful online resources include:

**WorkSource:** <http://www.go2worksource.com>. Job seekers can search more than 11,000 job listings, get information on career events in their communities, and post resumes that can be viewed by employers. Employers and job seekers can also find contact information for more than 50 WorkSource centers and affiliate sites statewide that provide career services at no cost.

***UIFastTax*, *UIWebTax* and E-pay:** <http://www.wa.gov/esd/uifasttax/default.htm>. *UIFastTax* and *UIWebTax* enable employers to report their wages and taxes online accurately and efficiently.

- Employers download the *UIFastTax* software online or from CD. They can prepare tax and wage reports on their computers, submit the records online, and store their data for later reference. If employers need help, they contact technical support.
- Alternatively, employers can use *UIWebTax* to file online in real time and print a copy of the report for their records.
- Businesses can pay their taxes electronically with a push of a button using Employment Security’s new E-Pay debit option.

**Unemployment Benefits:** <http://www.go2ui.com>. Find information about unemployment benefits and apply online 24 hours a day in English or Spanish.

**Workforce Explorer:** <http://www.workforceexplorer.com>. WorkSource Explorer provides easy access to a wide variety of career-assessment tools, labor-market and wage data, and articles of interest to job seekers, employers, researchers and policymakers. Users can save their favorite information on a personalized page.

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